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FIRST
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1

2

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4

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6



HISTORICAL READERS

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BY

THE REV. D. MORRIS, B.A.

AUTHOR OF "CLASS BOOK HISTORY OF ENGLAND," JOINT EDITOR OF "ANNOTATED
FORMS OF ENGLISH AUTHORS," ETC. ETC.

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CONTENTS.

Lesson	Page
I. ANCIENT BRITAIN	1
II. THE RELIGION OF THE BRITONS	5
III. THE ROMANS, AND WHAT THEY DID IN BRITAIN .	7
IV. HOW SOME BRAVE BRITONS FOUGHT AGAINST THE ROMANS	11
V. HENGIST AND Horsa, THE FIRST ENGLISH CHIEFS TO SETTLE IN BRITAIN	15
VI. THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS	18
VII. HOW THE ENGLISH BECAME CHRISTIANS—AUGUSTINE	21
VIII. HOW NORTHERN ENGLAND BECAME CHRISTIAN .	24
IX. THE COWHERD CEDMON.—THE FIRST ENGLISH POET	26
X. BEDE, THE PIOUS SCHOLAR	30
XI. HOW ALL THE ENGLISH CAME UNDER THE RULE OF KING EGBERT	34
XII. THE BOYHOOD OF KING ALFRED	37
XIII. HOW THE DANES TROUBLED ENGLAND	40
XIV. KING ALFRED AND THE DANES	43
XV. THE WISE LAWS OF KING ALFRED	46
XVI. KING ALFRED'S SCHOOLS AND BOOKS	49
XVII. DUNSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY . .	52
XVIII. ETHELRED, THE UNWISE KING	56
XIX. CANUTE, THE DANER	60
XX. KING CANUTE AND HIS FLATTERERS	63
XXI. EARL GODWIN, THE GREAT WEST-SAXON EARL .	66
XXII. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AND NORMANDY .	69
XXIII. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AND ENGLAND .	72
XXIV. LAST YEARS OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR .	77

Lesson	Page
XXV. KING HAROLD, THE SON OF GODWIN . . .	80
XXVI. INVASION OF THE NORMANS	83
XXVII. THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS	86
XXVIII. WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR	91
XXIX. HERWARD THE WAKE, AND THE CAMP OF REFUGE.	95
XXX. LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR	99
XXXI. DOMESDAY BOOK AND THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY .	102
XXXII. THE NEW FOREST AND THE RED KING . . .	106
XXXIII. HENRY, "THE FINE SCHOLAR"	110
XXXIV. THE WHITE SHIP	113
XXXV. HOW MATILDA WAS SET ASIDE BY STEPHEN .	116
XXXVI. MISERY OF ENGLAND UNDER STEPHEN . .	119
XXXVII. THE HOMES OF ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMAN KINGS	122
XXXVIII. THE FOOD OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE NORMAN KINGS	127
XXXIX. SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS LESSONS . . .	130
XL. CHIEF DATES	134



STONEHENGE, IN WILTSHIRE ; ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT WORKS
IN GREAT BRITAIN.

LESSON I.

ANCIENT BRITAIN.

THE country in which we now live is called England, that is, the land of the English ; but it was not always known by this name. The English people were not the first to settle here. Another race of men, called Britons, had made our island their home a long time before, and from them it was called Britain. In their day the country was covered with great woods, in which were found such wild animals as the bear, wolf, and boar. There were no towns

then in our island, or fields bounded by hedges, or roads, as we see now.

The Britons were almost savages. They did not know how to read or write, or build fine houses. They lived in the open spaces between the woods, in round huts of wood and mud, with a roof rising to a sharp point like a sugar-loaf. Around these dwellings they dug a ditch, and raised high banks of earth to keep off wild beasts and human foes. They lived upon the flesh and milk of their flocks and herds, and grew corn enough to furnish themselves with bread. From the wool of the sheep they made coats of rough cloth. They used to stain their faces, arms, and breasts with a blue dye, which they got from a plant called woad.

The Britons did not live together as a nation under one king. They were divided into tribes. A tribe is made up of a number of families, under the rule of a head or chief. As there were many chiefs in the country, quarrels arose, and wars between one tribe and another often happened. The men went to battle armed with swords and spears, and wore on their left arms small shields of wood covered with hide. They used their spears as darts, which they could throw a long distance and with a very

straight aim. They were also very clever in making war-chariots. These chariots had large



WELSH PIGSTY, SUPPOSED TO RESEMBLE EARLY BRITISH DWELLING.

broad knives fastened to the wheels, and did much havoc when driven at full speed in the thick of the fight.

SUMMARY.

The old name of our country was not England, but Britain. The people were not English, but Britons.

In their time the land was covered with woods, and had few roads. They had many chiefs. They used to fight fiercely, riding in war-chariots, and throwing spears.

Hav'-oc, mischief, damage.

towns
hedg'-es
herds

fur'-nish
quar'-rel
dis'-tance

clev'-er
straight
chief



LESSON II.

THE RELIGION OF THE BRITONS.

THOUGH the Britons did not know the worship of the true God, they were not without a religion of some sort. Their priests were called Druids. These men had very great power among the people. They settled all disputes, and if any man refused to obey their orders he was treated as an outcast from the tribe, and could not then receive the least kindness from any one. The Druids carried on their worship in the gloomy shade of groves of oak. Sometimes they put to death great numbers of men and women, as a religious offering to their gods. These wretched people were crowded together in great figures made of plaited osiers, just as strong baskets are now made, and then set on fire. So we must say that the religion of the Druids was marked with great cruelty. The Druids had great regard for the mistletoe plant. When this plant was found growing

upon an oak-tree, the chief Druid called all the tribe together on the first day of the new year, and with much show cut down the plant with a golden sickle. The mistletoe was then given away in pieces to be taken home as a lucky charm for the new year. At Christmas time our people still like to place this plant in their houses, and in this way we are put in mind of the old custom of the Druids.

Much of what we know of Britain and its old people has been told us by a famous soldier who came from Rome, a great city in Italy, about fifty-five years before the birth of Jesus Christ. His name was Julius Cæsar. How he came to this island, and what his people did here, belong to another lesson.

SUMMARY.

The priests of the Britons were called Druids. They had great power over the people. Some of their customs were very cruel, such as their human sacrifices. The mistletoe was their sacred plant.

Dru'-ids
re-lig'-i-ous
plait'-ed

mis'-tle-toe
os'-i-ers
sic-kle

priest
cus'-tom
re-fus'-ed

LESSON III.

THE ROMANS, AND WHAT THEY DID IN BRITAIN.

JULIUS CÆSAR, about whom we read in the Second Lesson, wished to put Britain under the rule of the city of Rome, which was at the head of nearly all the countries then known in our part of the world. He came to our island twice with a large army of Roman soldiers, and beat the natives in several battles, because his men wore armour to protect their bodies, and knew well how to fight together. After seeing what the country was like, he took his men back over the sea, and left the Britons to themselves.

About a hundred years afterwards the Romans came again to conquer the island. The Britons fought bravely under their chiefs, but all in vain, as they did not really know how to carry on war like their enemies. Thus it came to pass that the whole of Britain very quickly fell under the rule of the Romans.

The story of the way some of the native chiefs struggled hard for their lands and homes must be told in another lesson.

It was a good thing, after all, for the Britons to come under the rule of such a people as the



NEW PORT GATE, LINCOLN. (A Roman Work.)

Romans. These new masters had wise laws, and a knowledge of books, crafts, and trades. They knew how to make good clothes, pleasant houses, strong towns, and fine roads. They *knew* also how to build ships, and make

bridges over broad rivers. All these good and useful things they taught the Britons, who thus became less rude, and more willing to be under the rule of a city so famous as Rome.

Many of the towns built in the island by the Romans remain to this day. Most of them were at first places where the soldiers fixed their camp, which in their speech was called *castra*. This word is sometimes written *caster*, *cester*, and *chester*. When, therefore, we now find on the map one of these words in the name of any town, such as *Doncaster*, *Leicester*, *Manchester*, and *Chester*, we may be quite sure that the Romans had once a camp there, which in time became a town. All the towns were joined together by well-made roads, and many of these roads also are to be found at the present day.

During this time the religion of Jesus Christ was made known to the Britons. Many of them gave up the teachings of the Druids, and became Christians. Thus we see what good came from the Roman conquest. The poor half-savage natives not only learnt how to build better houses and make good clothes, but also the lessons of holy and happy living taught in the Christian religion.

The Romans were masters of this country for nearly four hundred years. At the end of that time they withdrew their officers and soldiers, because these were wanted in their own land. So Britain was once more left to itself.

The Romans left this country about four hundred and ten years after the birth of Christ.

DATES.

Julius Cæsar first came to Britain . . .	55 B.C.
The Roman Conquest of Britain began . . .	43 A.D.
The Romans leave Britain . . .	410 „

SUMMARY.

About a hundred years after Julius Cæsar left Britain, the Romans came back again under another leader, and conquered the country. Under the better rule of the Romans the Britons learned trades, built cities, and made roads. And above all, there came good men who taught them the religion of Jesus Christ.

ar'-mour
pro-TECT'
teach'-ings

strug'-gled
know'-ledge
of'-fic-ers

pleas'-ant
nat'-ives
sold'-i-ers





FIGHT BETWEEN BARBARIANS AND ROMAN SOLDIERS.

LESSON IV.

HOW SOME BRAVE BRITONS FOUGHT AGAINST THE
ROMANS.

AMONG the British chiefs who fought bravely against the Romans, one stands out in fame above all the rest. His name was Caractacus. For nine years he carried on war in defence of his country, and several times drove back the Romans with great loss. His bravery, skill, and courage were talked about all over

the island, and his fame even reached as far as the city of Rome itself. The Romans hoped to kill him in battle, or to take him prisoner, for they knew that as long as he was alive and free, their conquest of the land would not be easy.

The chances of war at last placed the British hero in their hands. Hearing that he was at the head of a great number of men on one of the hills in that part of the country now called Shropshire, they marched against him with a great army. Though his camp was wisely chosen, and made safe by a wall of massy stones, the onset of the Romans under the cover of their shields could not be beaten back, and Caractacus was forced to fly before the better arms of the enemy. His wife, daughter, and brothers were, however, taken prisoners, and soon after he was betrayed by his heartless stepmother, who bound him in chains, and gave him up to the Romans.

The brave captive and his family were sent to Rome, where the people were eager to see one who had fought so well and so long against their power. When he saw the fine buildings and riches of that famous city, he wondered why its people should want to become masters

of his humble home in Britain. Chained like a captive, he was taken before the ruler of the Romans, who was called an Emperor. His manly bearing and brave spirit so pleased the Emperor, that his chains were struck off, and he and his family set at liberty. What became of Caractacus afterwards we do not know.

Another leader, who was famous in the wars against the Romans, was a woman, named Boadicea. She was the widow of the chief of a tribe living in the eastern part of the island, now called Norfolk and Suffolk, which you may find on the map. This brave lady so stirred up the spirit of her tribe, that under her guidance they overthrew the Romans with much slaughter. Town after town fell into her hands, and even London, then a growing place of trade, failed to escape her attack. But at last her victories came to an end. In a great battle with the Romans her army was beaten; but, rather than allow herself to be taken prisoner, she took poison and died.

In the stories of Caractacus and Boadicea, we learn how well the Britons fought for their country.

DATES.

Caractacus taken prisoner	.	.	.	51 A.D.
Boadicea died	.	.	.	61 „

SUMMARY.

Caractacus was a famous British chief. He defeated the Romans many times, but at last he was beaten in a great battle, betrayed by his own stepmother, and carried in chains to Rome. Boadicea, the brave wife of another British chief, overthrew the Roman armies many times, and at last killed herself rather than be a slave.

Bear-ing, behaviour, manner.

cour'-age

mass'-y

won'-der-ed

;

shields

cap'-tive

slaugh'-ter

guid'-ance

build'-ings

spir'-it



LESSON V.

HENGIST AND Horsa, THE FIRST ENGLISH CHIEFS TO SETTLE IN BRITAIN.

AFTER the Romans left Britain, the country was much troubled by the people named Picts and Scots, who lived in that part of the island now called Scotland. These men often came south, killing all that came in their way, and taking back to their northern homes the spoils of the British towns. The leaders of the Britons were not able to defend their lands from the attacks of these fierce men of the north, and so they were forced to get help wherever they could.

Just then three ships full of fighting men were sailing about the coasts of Britain, under the command of two brothers called Hengist and Horsa. They had come across the North Sea from the south coasts of Denmark, and they were always ready to fight for plunder, or for pay. They loved to roam over the seas, for

they were brave and hardy, and they cared nothing for wind or storm. These were the men the Britons asked to drive the Picts and Scots back to their own hills.

But Hengist and Horsa were not willing to leave Britain after their fighting work was done. They saw that the island was richer and more



ANGLO-SAXON VESSEL.

beautiful than the flat sandy lands from which they came, and they knew they could easily take it from the Britons, who had not been able to defend themselves: So they seized upon the district now called Kent, in the south-east of the island, and made it into an English kingdom, with Canterbury for its chief town.

Now Hengist and Horsa were men of English

race, and so they and their followers were the first Englishmen to settle in this country. The Britons, however, did not call them English, but Saxons; on the other hand, the English called the natives Welsh, and not Britons.

DATE.

The coming of Hengist and Horsa into Britain . 449 A.D.

SUMMARY.

After the Romans left this country the Britons suffered much from the attacks of Picts and Scots, tribes living in the country now called Scotland. With the help of Hengist and Horsa, two chiefs from Denmark, they drove back their enemies. But these new friends in turn quarrelled with the Britons, seized on Kent, and settled there. Hengist and Horsa and their followers were men of English race, so Kent was the first English kingdom in Britain.

spoils
fierce
plun'-der

roam
set-tle
dis'-trict

seiz'-ed
com'-mand
de-fend'



LESSON VI.

THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS.

YEAR after year for a long time fresh bands of English landed here, until nearly the whole of the island fell into their hands. The different shires, or counties, which we see on the map of England, show where they settled as they came into the island, for nearly every one of the counties bears an English name. Each great settlement was ruled by the chief of the band, who took the title of king, and called the district under his authority a kingdom. Thus there arose numerous English kingdoms in our island—how many we do not know ; but there were seven which stood in power above all the rest. The kings of these seven kingdoms often went to war with each other, because each king wanted to make himself head of the others. By degrees, therefore, the kingdoms became less in number, until at last only one remained. But this did not take place for

more than three hundred years after Hengist and Horsa settled in Kent. We shall learn something about this event in a future lesson.

The Britons fought hard for their homes, but, just as their fathers had been beaten by the Romans a long time before, so now they were forced to find shelter among the mountains in the west of the island, where the English did not care to follow them. Thus it came to pass that the name Britain was changed into that of England, which means, as you know, the land of the English. But the part where the ancient Britons sought safety was called Wales; that is to say, the country of the Welsh.

The English people, when they came here first, were very rude. They did not like the towns, which the Britons had made under the Romans, but they loved better to live in the open country, where they built places of their own, and gave them names in their own tongue. This is why all the villages and most of the towns in our island have English names.

The English, besides, had not heard anything of the name of Jesus Christ, or the true God. They gave great honour to the sun and

moon, and gods who, they thought, favoured battle and brave men. How they came to know better, we shall soon see.

SUMMARY.

Many of our counties were once English kingdoms, each ruled over by a separate king. But in a little more than three hundred years after the landing of Hengist and Horsa one king had made himself lord over all the rest. The Britons were driven back into the mountains of Wales. The English liked the open country better than towns, and where they settled they gave the places English names.

shire
set-tle-ment
king-dom

num'-er-ous
shel'-ter
an'-ci-ent

tongue
vil-lag-es
fav'-oured





OLD CHURCH OF CANTERBURY, ON THE SITE OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S
WOODEN CHURCH.

LESSON VII.

HOW THE ENGLISH BECAME CHRISTIANS.—

AUGUSTINE.

WHEN the English came into Britain they were not under the rule of one king, as we are now. We learnt in the previous lesson how they formed little kingdoms among themselves as they settled in the land from time to time, and they placed over these kingdoms their bravest leaders, each of whom they named King; that is to say, the head of the race, or kin. So there were many kings in our island in

those old times, and they often fought one against another. Persons taken in war were sold as slaves, and thus it came to pass that English people were sometimes sent to be sold in slave-markets across the seas. There was such a market in Rome—that famous city about which we read in our first lessons. Once some English boys, with fair hair and rosy cheeks, were standing there for sale, when there came by a good Christian priest named Gregory. He stopped to look at their fair faces, and then asked where they came from. His heart was moved with pity at the sight of these boys, whose looks were more like angel faces than slaves, and he then said he would go himself, or send some one to their country to teach the love and mercy of God. This is how Christian teachers came to be sent to the English.

The man chosen for this work was a good priest named Augustine. With a band of forty men he came into the kingdom of Kent, where the King was ready to receive him kindly, and hear what he had to say. The meeting took place one fine day in the open air. Augustine preached so well that the King and most of his people became Christians.

Churches were built in Canterbury and other places, and Augustine became the first English bishop, and fixed his seat at Canterbury. This is the reason why the Bishop of Canterbury remains to this day the chief bishop of the English Church, and is styled Archbishop.

DATE.

The landing of Augustine in Kent . . . 597 A.D.

SUMMARY.

The English people were not Christians. But a good priest in Rome named Gregory took pity on some English boys in a Roman slave-market, and he sent a band of forty Christian teachers to this country who preached to the people of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine led them and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

ang'-el
mark'-et

mer'-cy
chos'-en

bish'-op
re-ceive'



LESSON VIII.

HOW NORTHERN ENGLAND BECAME CHRISTIAN.

IN a few years other English kings followed the example of the King of Kent. How this happened in Yorkshire deserves to be told more fully, because it shows the willingness of the people to learn what might do them good. Augustine sent one of his clergy into the northern English kingdom. The King called his great men together to hear what the new teacher had to say, and asked each one what was the best thing to do.

One of them said, " You know, O King, how, when you sit at supper in your great hall in the winter with your nobles about you, and a good fire blazing in the midst, while without the rain and snow are falling, and the wind howling, and the two doors are opened at each end, sometimes it happens that a poor little sparrow flies in at one door and out at the other ; but for the short time during which he is in the hall he enjoys the light and warmth, and is safe from the wintry storms. The swift

flight of the sparrow from one darkness into another, but with this short space of time during which we see him, is like to the life of man. What the life of man was before he came upon earth, and what his future life is to be, we know not. All that we know is what we see of him during the time that he is here. If, then, this new teaching can tell us something more of whence and whither man comes and goes, it is worth while to listen to it."

This good advice was hailed with shouts of praise. The new teaching met with all success, and York became the seat of a bishop, and the head of the Church in northern England. On this account the Bishop of York is called an Archbishop. Thus we can understand why the English Church has two Archbishops—the Archbishop of York for the north of England, and the Archbishop of Canterbury for the south. But Canterbury has always been the first in rank, because it was founded by Augustine.

SUMMARY.

From Kent the Christian religion spread to other parts of England, and in a beautiful story we are told how the men of Yorkshire were led to accept it.

cler'-gy
no'-bles

ex-am'-ple
ad-vice'

ac-count'
suc-cess'

LESSON IX.

THE COWHERD CÆDMON.—THE FIRST ENGLISH
POET.

THE old English people were a merry-making race. They were fond of joining together for feasting and drinking. Beer was **their** common drink ; but they also had a sort of wine made from honey, to which they gave the name of mead. If we could have peeped in at one of their parties, we should have seen that their plates were only flat pieces of **wood** : very unlike the bright and pretty ware we use in our day. They had no forks ; and their drinking cups were made of the horns of deer or cattle. Each man at the feast cut off from the smoking joint of meat, with his own knife or dagger, what he wished to eat. But, though their ways were ruder than ours, they had one good custom which we have not. When the meal was over, a small harp was passed round to every one in turn that he

might play upon it, while he sang some song. Any man that could not do this was looked upon as unfitted to take a place at a feast.

Once upon a time such a party met to-



WHITBY ABBEY.

gether in a little town on the coast of Yorkshire, now called Whitby. One of the feasters was a man named Cædmon, whose work was to mind the cattle belonging to a large house, where a number of Christian men and women

then lived together to teach and to do good to the people about them. Cædmon, for some cause or other, never learned a song, and when he saw the harp coming towards him, he felt ashamed, rose up, and went to lie down in the stable among the cattle, grieving sorely that he could not join in the mirth like others. He soon fell asleep; and then he had a strange dream. In his slumber a stranger came to him and said—"Cædmon, sing me some song."

"I cannot sing," said Cædmon; "for this cause I left the feast and came hither."

"Nay," answered the vision; "thou must sing."

"What shall I sing?" replied he.

"Sing the beginning of created things," was the answer. Forthwith Cædmon began to sing verses he had never heard before. When he awoke the words of his song were fresh in his mind, and he found himself able to sing other songs without any trouble.

In the morning he was taken before the lady Hilda, who was the head of the religious house at Whitby, and he told his dream to her and many others, and they all agreed that the gift of song had come to him from Heaven.

The lady Hilda then begged him to join her house. This he did; and then he caused to be written down his heaven-sent songs. After his death the English people spoke of him as a very holy man—a saint, whose name ought to be held in honour.

Cædmon always wrote religious poetry. The things he put into verse are all found in the Bible. We must, therefore, remember that our first English poet was only a cowherd, and that his poems were about sacred things.

DATE.

Death of Cædmon. 680 A.D.

SUMMARY.

The old English feasts were ruder than ours. But they had one good custom. After the feast each guest had to give some song. Cædmon, a cowherd of Whitby, could not sing, and grieved sorely that he could not join the mirth. But one night he dreamt that a stranger came to him and said, "Cædmon, thou must sing." And ever after this vision he could sing his song with the rest. Cædmon's songs were about sacred things. And people said the gift of song had come to him from Heaven.

mead
ware

feast-ers
vis'-i-on

po'-em
sa'-cred

LESSON X.

BEDE, THE PIOUS SCHOLAR.

ABOUT the time of the poet Cædmon's death at Whitby, there was in a religious house, standing where the river Wear flows into the North Sea, a little boy who grew to be a good and famous man. His name was Bede. In his days there were no printed books like ours, because printing was not then known. All books were written by hand on sheepskins, now called parchment, for the old English people did not know how to make paper, as we do. So books were few in number, and were only to be found in such houses as those in which Cædmon and Bede lived. It was much harder then to learn to read than in our time, so that no one could become a good scholar unless he really loved learning, and gave his mind to it.

Now little Bede was a boy of this kind. He *wanted to know* all he could about the things

that came in his way, and the story of the coming of his countrymen into Britain; and to get this knowledge he worked hard to become a good reader and writer. He himself tells us that nothing gave him so much pleasure as to spend his time in learning, or teaching, or writing.

When Bede was old enough, he chose to pass his life in a religious house not far from his own home—that is to say, he became a monk. As books were few, he thought he could do nothing better than use his learning in writing useful works. In this labour he spent his whole life for the profit of those that came after him. “I am not willing,” he once said, “that my children should read what is not true, and should, when I am dead, spend their labours in this matter to no profit.” Brave words like these show how true and good he was.

Bede's last work was to put into English the Gospel of St. John. The English in those days had no Bible in their own speech. Scholars only could read that holy book, because it was written in a foreign tongue. So Bede did a holy work when he gave to his countrymen in *their own mother-tongue* the story of the life.

of Jesus Christ. When this task was coming to an end he was an old man, and very ill. Day by day he called his scholars round his bed, and told them to write down in English the words of the Gospel, as he gave them out. His dying day at last came, and one chapter only was left to be written. "There is still a chapter wanting," said one of the youths, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself longer."

"It is easily done," said the dying monk. "Take thy pen and write quickly."

Through the hours the work went busily on. "Still one sentence more, dear master, remains to be written," said the scribe.

"Write it quickly," answered Bede.

"It is finished now," said the youth.

"Thou speakest the truth; it is finished. Raise my head in your hands, for I should like to lie opposite to that holy place where I used to pray, so that resting there I may call upon God my Father." Thus raised and placed, the aged and pious scholar said, "Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," and then died.

DATE.

Death of Bede 785 A.D.

SUMMARY.

Before printing was known books were written by hand on sheepskins. And good men spent their lives in writing or copying useful works, that more people might have them to read. Bede, a monk of Wearmouth, was one of these pious scholars. He first put into English the Gospel of St. John.

print'-ing
parch'-ment
schol'-ar

la'-bours
pro'-fit
chap'-ter

ques'-ti-on
op'-po-site
pi'-ous



A MONK COPYING A BOOK IN THE OLDEN TIME.

LESSON XI.

HOW ALL THE ENGLISH CAME UNDER THE RULE OF KING EGBERT.

WE read in Lessons VII. and VIII. how the English became Christians. Now one of the great lessons that good men like Augustine and Bede taught was peace and good-will between man and man, as if they were members of one family. By this teaching, the English people, who had formed many little kingdoms in the island, as we read in our Sixth Lesson, were drawn closer together in feeling, and began to think that, as they were really brethren, it would be better to be under the rule of one king.

In course of time, therefore, it came to pass that all the petty kingdoms were united under one royal head. It is well, then, to bear in mind that this union was due chiefly to the lessons of Christian teaching.

The kingdom, that became the head of all *the others*, lay to the south of the river Thames.

It was called Wessex, that is, the "West-Saxon people," because it lay to the west of the Saxons who settled in the island before them. We can easily find its place on the map. Winchester was its chief town. But this city, as its name shows, was not built at first by the Wessex people. The name *Chester* reminds us of the Roman times, and proves that it was once a Roman camp, as we learnt in Lesson III.

The King of Wessex at this time was named Egbert. He was a famous soldier and wise ruler. On this account all the other English kingdoms were glad to have him as their overlord. He did not, however, call himself King of the English, but King of the West Saxons. He was followed on the throne of Wessex by a line of brave kings, who aimed to make the English people united and strong. It was several years after Egbert's death before a Wessex king called himself "King of the English."

We should therefore remember that it was one of the southern English kingdoms which became the head of all the others in our island, and that this important event took place in the reign of Egbert.

DATES.

*Wessex, under Egbert, became head of all the
English kingdoms 827 A.D.*

SUMMARY.

In course of time the people of the various English kingdoms began to feel that it would be better to be united under one king. The kingdom that became the head of all the others was called Wessex. It lay south of the Thames. The name of its king was Egbert. Soon after Egbert's death the King of Wessex was called "King of the English."

O'-ver-lord, a king who was lord over other kings.

pet'-ty
un'-i-on
un-it'-ed

im-port'-ant
reign
e-vent'

aim-ed
sev'-er-al
peo'-ple



LESSON XII.

THE BOYHOOD OF KING ALFRED.

THE son of Egbert, who followed his father on the throne of Wessex, had four sons. Each of these in turn became king; but the youngest, whose name was Alfred, was one of the most famous kings that ever lived. His goodness, wisdom, and bravery earned for him the name of *Great*, and in our history he is always known as King Alfred the Great.

We know a few things about the boyhood of this great king. When only about six years old he was taken by his father to see the famous city of Rome, because it was then thought the most wonderful place in the world. In Rome little Alfred would see schools, churches, and fine buildings, unknown in this country at that time. There he lived for a year, and must have learnt much from the great sights of that famous city.

When he was a boy of twelve years old, he could neither read nor write, for there were few

teachers then, and fewer schools. Books also were scarce in those days, as we saw when reading about the monk Bede in the Tenth



Lesson. So young princes and nobles spent their time in games and sports, and in learning how to use the spear and sword, in case their country should be in danger of war.

But Alfred had a good stepmother who was fond of books and reading. One day she was sitting among her sons with a very pretty book in her hand, from which she read some stories in poetry. It was the custom then for the writers of books to paint the first letter and the sides of the page in pretty colours of gold, red, or blue. Such was the book that Alfred's mother held in her hand. Seeing how pleased her boys were with its tales and colouring, she said, "I will give this handsome book to the first one of you who learns to read." Alfred set to work at once in order to win the prize. He sought out a teacher that very day, and so heeded his lessons that in a short time he was able to read. Thus he won the book, and was proud of it all his life. We shall see by-and-by what good use he made of his learning.

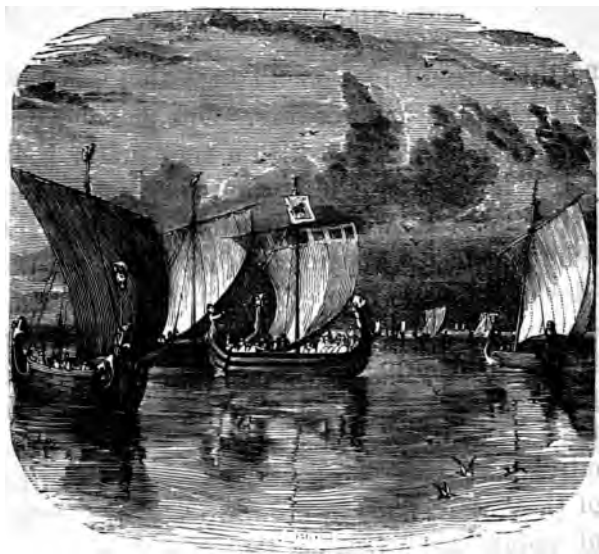
SUMMARY.

Alfred the Great was grandson to Egbert, King of Wessex. He is called Great because of his great goodness and wisdom. But teachers and books were so scarce in those days that he was twelve years old before he learned to read. When a little child he went with his father to Rome. He had a good stepmother, who was fond of books and taught him to read.

fol'-low-ed
his'-tor-y
throne

spear
sword
dan'-ger

heed'-ed
pret-ty
hand'-some



DANISH SHIPS.

LESSON XIII.

HOW THE DANES TROUBLED ENGLAND.

WHEN Alfred became king, England was very much troubled by the Danes. These people came from the coasts of Sweden and Norway and the islands of Denmark, which the teacher can show us on the map of Europe. Because their homes lay in these

northern countries, the Danes were also called Northmen. They belonged to the same race as the English, and spoke almost the same tongue. They were very strong, brave, and venturesome, and loved to sail over the seas in their long black ships. They laughed at the wind and the storm, and boasted in the name of sea-kings, because they thought themselves masters of the mighty deep. No place near the sea or a broad river was safe from their attack, for they loved to plunder the cities and rich lands of other people. The sight of their dark ships struck terror into the hearts of villagers and townsmen, for the fierce sea-rovers spared nothing which they could not take away with them.

Long before Alfred became king the Northmen had visited the eastern coasts of our island, because these places were nearest to their own shores; and with fire and sword had laid in ruins churches, houses, and towns. They seized the ruler of these parts, who was a sort of under-king named Edmund, and tied him to a tree. They were angry with him because he had given up the old heathen religion of the English race. So they said they would kill him if he did not return to their faith and worship;

but he answered, "No, I will die a Christian." Then, in a rage, they shot at him with their arrows, and in the end cut off his head. Where this took place a town was afterwards built, to which was given the name of Edmunds-bury, after the good Prince Edmund. If we look at the map of England we shall find this town in the county of Suffolk, and when we see its name we shall think of the cruel Danes.

SUMMARY.

The Danes, or Northmen, were a hardy race from the northern countries of Sweden and Norway and the islands of Denmark. Long before the days of Alfred they had visited this country for plunder. In one place they took prisoner an under-king, named Edmund, and because he would not give up the Christian religion they killed him with their arrows. This place was afterwards called Edmunds-bury.

troub'-led
coasts
isl-ands

vis'-it-ed
heath'-en
wor'-ship

ar'-rows
at'-tack
mas'-ters



LESSON XIV.

KING ALFRED AND THE DANES.

Alfred's time the Danes had crossed into middle of England, and were then trying to seize the old kingdom of Wessex.

Alfred met them bravely at the head of his men, and fought them well in many a stubborn fight; but his forces were so weakened by long warfare, that he was obliged to disguise himself and seek shelter in the woods and marshes of Athelney, in the district now called Somersetshire. In the cottage of a cowherd he took up his abode without making himself known to his simple host. One day the peasant's wife left her lodger in charge of some cakes upon the hearth, but instead of minding



the bread his thoughts were busy how to free his kingdom from the hands of the Danes. So when the woman came back and saw her cakes burnt, she flew into a rage, saying, "You idle dog, you will be glad to eat them by-and-by, and yet you cannot watch them;" but she did not know it was the King. Long afterwards a beautiful gold jewel was found in the district of Athelney, and upon it were the words, "Alfred had me wrought." This jewel may now be seen in a museum at Oxford.

After awhile Alfred called his friends about him and made ready to attack the Northmen; but before beginning the battle he did a very bold thing. He wished to know the strength of his enemy, and how best to fight him. So he went in the disguise of a harper into the Danish camp and sang songs before the chiefs, keeping his eyes and ears open, and thus learnt all he wanted to know. In the battle that followed the Danes received a crushing defeat, and were glad to leave Wessex. They also agreed to become Christians, and live at peace in the eastern and northern parts of England under their conqueror Alfred. The Danes did not trouble England for many years after this. So Alfred was able to spend the rest of his

reign for the good of his people by making wise laws, founding schools, and writing books.

DATES.

Alfred began to reign	871 A.D.
Defeat of the Danes by Alfred	878 A.D.

SUMMARY.

When the Danes came to Wessex King Alfred was forced for a time to hide himself for safety in the marshes of Somerset. But after awhile he collected his friends together, defeated the Danes, and forced them to leave Wessex. He made them agree to become Christians, and gave them places to live in. Thus King Alfred had a time of peace to make wise laws and build schools. He also wrote books.

Mus-e'-um , a building or		tion of curious or instructive objects is kept.
room in which a collec-		

stub'-born
dis-guise'
host

lodg'-er
jew'-el
wrought

en'-e-my
harp'-er
crush'-ing



LESSON XV.

THE WISE LAWS OF KING ALFRED.

AFTER the Danes had agreed to settle down quietly among the English or leave the country, Alfred took steps to make his kingdom strong and happy. He ordered the building of stone forts and castles, for up to this time such buildings were mostly made of wood. He also took care to see that all his fighting men were well drilled, and ready at any time to turn out at the call of danger. But as England was open to attacks by water, he had the wisdom to see that his kingdom could never be safe unless it were the mistress of the seas. He, therefore, made war-ships of such size and speed that the roving Northmen would not dare to meet them in battle. Thus England on land and sea was made in battle safe and strong.

King Alfred, having made his kingdom peaceful, then tried to make his people happy by making good and just laws. He brought

together in writing all the good customs and laws that he could find, and placed them before a meeting of all his great men, who were called the Witan—that is, the *knowing* or *wise* men. Now we will read his own words about this matter. “I then, Alfred, King, gathered these laws together, and commanded many of them to be written, which our forefathers held, those which to me seemed good ; and many of those, which seemed to me not good, I refused them by the advice of my Witan.” We see, then, that Alfred wanted to give his people good laws and not bad ones.

Before these dooms (for *dooms* was a common word for law or judgment in the olden time) King Alfred caused to be written out of the Bible a verse which is often called the golden rule of life, because it is so good and noble. This is the verse in the King’s own words:—“That ye will that other men do not to you, do ye not that to other men.” And then the good King goes on to say about it:—“From this one doom a man may think that he should doom everyone rightly ; he need keep no other doom-book. Let him take heed that he doom to no man that he would not that he doom to him, if he sought doom over him,”

Nobler words than these were never spoken by any king. They prove that Alfred was as good as he was brave.

Alfred, again, did more than make just laws. He took every care that his judges should rightly carry them out, and do all in their power to protect the poor. And this was done so well, that it is said, jewels might be placed on the trees by the highway, and no one would touch them. On this account all men spoke lovingly of their king, calling him "England's darling" and "England's comfort."

SUMMARY.

King Alfred tried to make England powerful by drilling his soldiers and building stone castles and big war-ships. But he also took care to make his people happy by making just laws. With the aid of his Witan, or meeting of wise men, he wrote down all the good customs he could find, and had good judges to see them carried out. These "dooms" of Alfred earned him the love of his people, who talked of him as "England's darling" and "England's comfort."

forts
drill'-ed
mis'-tress

judg'-ment
ad-vice'
doom

pro'-tect
dar'-ling
jew-el



SAXON LANTERN.

LESSON XVI.

KING ALFRED'S SCHOOLS AND BOOKS.

WE have seen how King Alfred aimed to make his people safe in their homes and happy under just laws. But he wanted to do something even more than this. He wished to give his people the power of reading, so that they might have better minds, and learn from good books the lessons of right living. "I desire," said he, "*that every free-born youth, who has*

the means, should attend to his book till he could read English writing perfectly." But it was not easy for the young to get the means of learning to read, because books were still very scarce, as we read they were in the time of Bede. (Lesson X.) Most likely the wars of the Danes had much to do with this scarcity. Those sea-rovers burnt many churches and religious houses where writings were kept, and thus many books were lost for ever. Besides, when men had to fight again and again for their homes and lives, they had neither mind nor time to give to learning.

Alfred, king though he was, set to work himself to supply the English youth with books in their own mother-tongue. The only works they had in their own speech, up to this time, were Cædmon's poem; the Gospel of St. John, about which we read in our Tenth Lesson; the Psalms out of the Bible; and some short pieces of poetry. To these the good King added six other books; and it is also said that he put into English parts of Holy Scripture, after the example set by Bede.

The building of schools was the next thing that Alfred busied himself about. He caused these to be set up in various places. In order

to set a good example to his great men, he took care to have a school near his own palace, where the young nobles of his court might be taught, and where their training might be under his own eye.

The hardest work of all was to get teachers. But Alfred was not to be beaten. He sought for them far and near, and offered them favour and rewards to help his noble work in the schools.

We can now easily understand why Alfred was called *the Great*. A king who loved his people, gave them good laws, schools, teachers, and books, deserves to be held in honour, and called by the highest name. So Alfred was *great*, because the aim of his life was to make his people happy.

DATE.

Death of King Alfred 901 A.D.

SUMMARY.

King Alfred set up schools and sought teachers from far and near. In those days there were only three or four books in the English language. To these Alfred added six others, besides putting into English parts of Holy Scripture.

hap'-py
les'-sons

writ'-ing
young

sup-ply'
var'-i-ous

LESSON XVII.

DUNSTAN, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Soon after the death of Alfred the Great a little boy was born in the south of England, who became the most famous Englishman of his time. His name was Dunstan. Though he was the son of a man of high rank, he did not spend his days in games and sports, but gave himself up to the study of books and music, and learned how to build houses and make useful things. When he became a man he chose to lead the life of a monk in the Abbey of Glastonbury, which was situated near the place where King Alfred hid himself from the Danes. This abbey was then the most famous religious house in England. In awhile Dunstan became its abbot, and under his rule Glastonbury rose to be the greatest place of learning in the country.

Now Dunstan's knowledge and wisdom were so great and well known that his advice was

often asked by the King. At length he left his work at Glastonbury to attend the King's court, and help with his counsels the government of the country.

The people of England then were not so united as they are now, though Egbert had brought them under the rule of one king, as we read in the Eleventh Lesson. The Danes, whom Alfred had allowed to settle in the north and eastern parts of the island, gave much trouble after the death of that king, and hindered the growth of unity among the people. They wanted to set up a kingdom of their own in the north of England, and thus undo Egbert's work. Now this was prevented by the wise schemes of Dunstan. He broke the power of the Danes in the north, and then tried to win them into obedience and quietness by allowing them to keep their own customs and such laws as they thought best.

Dunstan was at length made Archbishop of Canterbury; but he still continued to guide with his advice the affairs of the country. So well did he succeed in making England quiet and orderly that King Edgar, who was then on the throne, was called Edgar *the Peaceful*. Even the Welsh and Scotch, who had for years

been unfriendly to the English, paid respect to the authority of Edgar. Once, when this king visited the city of Chester, his barge was rowed down the river Dee by eight princes, of whom some were Scotch and others Welsh. Such was the respect shown to Edgar.

During this king's reign an attempt was made to rid the country of wolves. These wild and savage animals were then found in the woods in great numbers. So the Welsh chiefs on the English border were ordered by Edgar to give up three hundred wolves' heads every year instead of a money payment. In this and other ways England in time got rid of its wolves.

Dunstan also tried to improve the manners and learning of the clergy. Forty new abbeys were built in different parts of the country, and as all these abbeys had a school, the means of education were so much the more increased.

England prospered greatly under Dunstan's wise guidance; but after his death there was no one like him to fill his place. So it happened that much trouble came again upon the land, as we shall read in the next lesson.

SUMMARY.

After the death of Alfred, Dunstan became the most

famous Englishman of his time. From being a monk of Glastonbury he rose to be Archbishop of Canterbury. After Alfred's death the Danes again became troublesome. But by his wise schemes Dunstan first broke up their power and then by kindness made friends of them. Thus England was kept quiet and orderly, and King Edgar was called Edgar the Peaceful. In this reign many abbeys and schools were built, and an attempt was made to rid the country of wolves.

mus'-ic
ab'-bot
coun'-sels

un'-i-ty
ob-ed'-i-ence
af-fairs'

pay'-ment
ab'-beys
pros'-per-ed



LESSON XVIII.

ETHELRED, THE UNWISE KING.

Soon after the death of Dunstan, a king reigned in England who had nothing of the wisdom of Alfred or Edgar the Peaceable. This was Ethelred, the *Unready*, or the *Unwise*, for such was the meaning of the word in old English. In his days the country was troubled again by fresh bands of roving Danes, under the command of a very famous chief, named Sweyn. Now Ethelred was a poor, weak king, who, instead of meeting the Danes bravely in battle, as his fathers had done, gave them large sums of money to go away. But this was very unwise, because when the money was all spent, they came back again for more, and always asked for larger sums.

Then Ethelred was tempted to do a very cowardly and foolish thing. He ordered that all the Danes, who had not left the country with Sweyn, should be put to death on a certain dark

winter's night. The order was cruelly carried out. But among the slain was Sweyn's own sister, and when the news of her murder reached his ears, he swore that he would have his revenge.

Next year the dreaded sea-kings swarmed about the English coasts. For six years Sweyn and his men carried on a cruel war of revenge in our island. They burnt farm-houses and the produce of the fields. In the track of their march were to be seen the smoking ruins of villages and towns. All who fell into their hands were obliged to buy their freedom with large sums of money, or else suffer death or slavery. Such was the misery brought about by Ethelred's foolish conduct.

There was one Englishman in those wretched times who showed himself to be brave and good. He was Alphege, the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the Danes took his city, they put him in chains until he should pay a large sum of money for his freedom. The Bishop, knowing that, whatever was paid, the money would come from the suffering people, refused to save himself at the expense of the poor. One Saturday evening his captors met together for feasting and drinking. In the

midst of their drunken revels they sent for the Bishop, from whom they again demanded gold. "I have none to give," said the Bishop. "Get it, then," shouted the angry Northmen. "That I will not," was the bold reply. Upon this they threw at his head the scraps of the feast. A large ox-bone struck him in the face, causing the blood to flow; and then everything that came to hand was hurled at him, until he was brought to the ground, bruised, battered, and stunned. One of the band then stepped forward, struck him on the head with a battle-axe, and thus put an end to his sufferings.

If Ethelred had had a little of the courage of good Bishop Alphege, he might have saved his kingdom. But the unwise King trusted again to gold instead of the sword, and so in the end was obliged to seek safety in France, and leave England to the Danes.

DATES.

Ethelred the Unready became king	.	.	.	979 A.D.
Murder of the Danes	.	.	.	1002 A.D.
Flight of Ethelred	.	.	.	1014 A.D.

SUMMARY.

*Ethelred the Unready was an unwise, cowardly king.
He offered the Danes money to leave the country, and*

then he killed many of those that were left, and amongst them the sister of Sweyn, a famous Danish chief. The Danes came back to England, murdered Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, and drove Ethelred into France.

re-venge'
cap'-tors

swarm'-ed
bat'-ter-ed

ex-pense'
re-ply





CANUTE LISTENING TO THE MONKS OF ELY.

LESSON XIX.

CANUTE, THE DANE.

THE sea-king Sweyn died just as he was
about to become the ruler of England. Then

all the chief men of his fleet agreed to make his son Canute king, and thus England passed under the rule of the Danes.

At first Canute was very cruel towards the relations of the late king, Ethelred, because he was afraid that the English might rise in arms in favour of one of them. He used to say, "He who brings me the head of one of my enemies shall be dearer to me than a brother." A saying like this was sure to cause the death of many persons, because it would tempt bad men to shed blood to win the royal favour.

But under the teaching of the English Church Canute became just and kind, and, like good King Alfred, did as much as he could for the happiness of his subjects. He built churches; favoured the clergy; and sent teachers across the sea into his native country to make known the Christian religion. He was fond of paying visits to holy places. Once he went to see the Church of Ely—a place which we may find in the eastern part of our country. At that time Ely stood on a sort of island in the midst of marshes and lakes, which are now drained. As the King drew near in a boat, he heard the monks of the church singing in the choir, and *he was so pleased that he himself began to*

make a song in English, of which the following is the first verse :—

“ Merrily sang the monks of Ely,
When Canute King rowed thereby ;
Row, boatmen, near the land,
And hear we these monks sing.”

SUMMARY.

After Ethelred fled to France, Canute, the son of Sweyn, was made King of England. At first he was cruel towards the English. But afterwards he came to love the teachings of the Church and tried to make his people happy.

re-la'-tions
roy'-al

cru'-el
cler'-gy

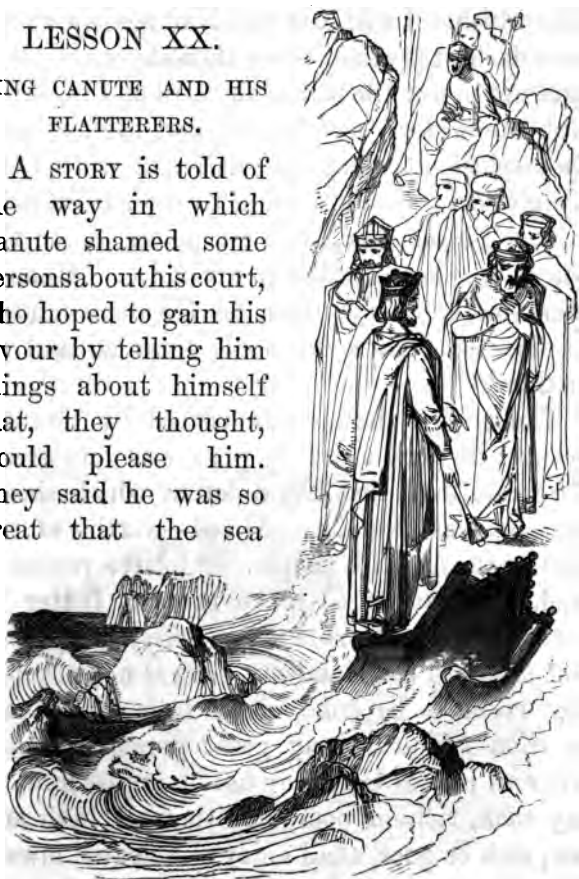
drain'-ed
fav-our-ed



LESSON XX.

KING CANUTE AND HIS FLATTERERS.

A STORY is told of the way in which Canute shamed some persons about his court, who hoped to gain his favour by telling him things about himself that, they thought, would please him. They said he was so great that the sea



would obey him. Pretending to believe them, he sat in a chair on the edge of the water, and said, "O sea, I am thy lord. My ships sail over thee whither I will, and this land against which thou dashest is mine. Stay then thy waves, and dare not to wet the feet of thy lord and master." But the waters rose higher and higher until they splashed round the chair and wetted the King's feet. Then turning to the flatterers he said, "Ye see how weak my power is, for the waves will not hearken to my voice. Honour then God and serve Him, for He alone can say to the sea, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.'"

The city of Rome was visited by Canute, because its fame as a holy place was very great. He wrote from that city a letter, which shows that he was like King Alfred—worthy of the love of the English people. "I have vowed to God," he says, "to make my life better in every way, and to rule my people with justice and mercy. I command my officers not to suffer any wrong to be done, either from fear of me, or from favour to any great person. I also order all judges that they use no unjust force to any man, rich or poor, but that all, high and low, rich or poor, shall enjoy alike equal laws."

After Canute's death, two of his sons mounted in turn the English throne ; but they were so unlike their father, and ruled so badly, that all the English people wished to have for king one of the sons of Ethelred the Unready.

The English succeeded in getting their wish by the help of a powerful nobleman named Earl Godwin, about whom we shall read in the next lesson.

DATE.

Canute the Dane's reign, from 1017 to 1035 A.D.

SUMMARY.

King Canute scorned flatterers, and tried to win the love of his people by ruling with justice and mercy, and making equal rules for rich and poor. But his two sons ruled so badly that the people asked one of Ethelred's sons to be King instead.

pre-tend'-ing
dash'-est

flat'-ter-ers
[heark'-en

e'-qual
mount'-ei



LESSON XXI.

EARL GODWIN, THE GREAT WEST-SAXON EARL.

EARL GODWIN was a very famous man, who rose to the highest rank and power in England in the time of King Canute. It is not known whether his parents were rich or poor, but most likely they were not great people, otherwise we should hear something about them. One account says that his father was a yeoman, that is, a farmer. The story says, that after one of the battles between the Danes and English a Danish chief lost his way, and by chance fell in with young Godwin. The youth took the Northman to his father's house, where he was kindly treated. The Dane was so pleased with his guide and host, that he brought young Godwin to the notice of King Canute, and did his best to help him to get on in the King's service.

Godwin made good use of the chances put *in his way*. He was never idle, and though *he worked hard* to please those above him, he

was true and brave on the side of right. Canute noted his labours and wisdom, and put him in charge of all the south of England with the high title of Earl. Thus Godwin rose to greatness by the right use of his many gifts, as many others have done since his time.

Earl Godwin was the founder of a family of great fame. He had six sons, all of whom were very noted men in their day. One of the bravest of the six, named Harold, was in the course of time crowned King of England. We shall, however, read about him in another lesson.

Earl Godwin had much to do in bringing about the election of the son of Ethelred the Unready to the English throne, because no family in the country had such power as the Earl's. But when this prince, who was called Edward, became king, he showed so much favour to the foreign people among whom he had lived many years, that Earl Godwin was obliged to stand up for the rights of his own countrymen, although the King had married his daughter Edith. A great quarrel, therefore, arose between Edward and the Earl, and the latter with his sons was driven out of England. *But they soon returned and became friends*

again, because the Earl and his family were much liked by the English people. Godwin was now an old man, and he did not live long after his return. One day, when dining at the King's table, he fell down in a fit, and died a day or two afterwards.

If we take the map of England and look at the east coast of Kent, we shall see there some sand-banks, which are known by the name of the "Goodwin Sands." It is said they are called after the name of the great Earl, to whom this part of the country belonged.

SUMMARY.

Earl Godwin, an Englishman, rose to great power under Canute. After Canute's death he brought about the election of the English King Edward, a son of Ethelred. When Edward showed favour to foreigners, Godwin stood up for the rights of the people. The Goodwin Sands are said to be called after him.

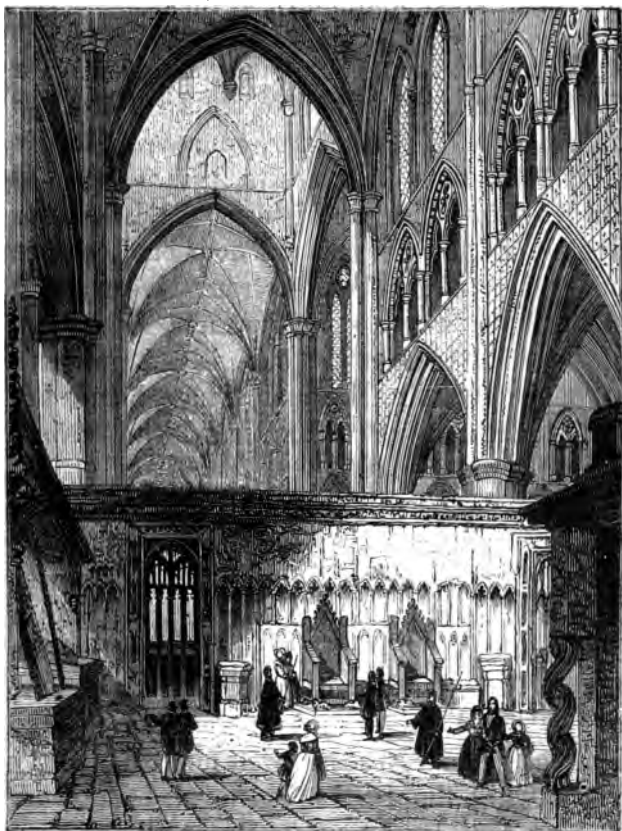
Yeo'-man, a small landowner.

peo'-ple

e-lec'-tion

chanc'-es





EDWARD THE CONFESSOR'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER.

LESSON XXII.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AND NORMANDY.

THIS prince, as the son of Ethelred the Unready, was one of the old English royal

stock, so that the throne of England was again filled by a man of English race. In after times he was called *the Confessor*, on account of his piety, and thus it comes to pass that he is always known in our history as Edward the Confessor. His reign is a famous one, because under him a number of strangers began to settle here, whose countrymen a few years afterwards conquered our island. These strangers were the Normans, whose homes lay in the northern part of France, which was then called Normandy.

In our Eighteenth Lesson we read how Ethelred the Unready fled across the seas through fear of Canute. Normandy was the place where he found safety, because he had married a Norman wife. Edward, his son, was at this time a little boy about thirteen years of age, and when his father died he was living at the Norman court. Here he dwelt for nearly thirty years, while the Danish kings ruled England. During that long time he learnt all the Norman ways and speech, and grew to like them better than those of his native country. When, therefore, he was chosen to fill the throne of his forefathers, he sent for many Normans, and placed them in high office about his person.

The word Norman is only another form of Northman, about which we read in Lesson XIII., when speaking of King Alfred and the Danes. One of the friends of the sea-king who fought against Alfred sailed up the river Seine, and seized the northern part of France. This Danish chieftain was called Rollo. He and his men were able to keep the land which they had won by the sword, and because they were Northmen the country took the name of Normandy. The Normans, therefore, were men of the same blood as King Canute and those other Danes who had settled in this island many years before.

But the children of Rollo and of his fellows soon forgot their own northern speech, and used instead the tongue of their new home, which was called French. They became famous for daring, high spirit, and skill in warlike deeds. They mixed with other people more than Englishmen did, and in this way they got to know more about books, building, and poetry than the people of our own country, who were shut in by the sea. Their great men lived in stone castles, and were very fond of hunting. They were noted horsemen, and in battle always fought on

horseback. They took greater pleasure than Englishmen did in gay shows and fine dresses, and knew better how to prepare and cook meats for the table. Such were the people among whom Edward the Confessor spent his boyhood and early manhood. From them he learnt to speak French; and because his mother was a lady of that country he was really more like a Norman than an Englishman. Thus we can understand why he showed these people such favour.

DATE.

Rollo, the Dane, founded Normandy . 913 A.D.

SUMMARY.

King Edward the Confessor had been brought up among the Normans, and loved their ways. These Normans were Northmen, or Danes, who settled in France under their chief, Rollo, when the other Danes attacked King Alfred in Wessex. They spoke French, and were skilful horsemen. A good many of these Normans came over with Edward to England.

chief-tain
pi'-e-ty

dar'-ing
speech

war'-like
build'-ing





GREAT SEAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

LESSON XXIII.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, AND ENGLAND.

EDWARD was about forty years old when he became king. His round rosy face, blue eyes, hair and beard white as snow, were very striking. He was kind, gentle, pious, and peaceful. He was, indeed, scarcely fitted to reign in days when kings were expected to be brave soldiers and the leaders of men in war.

A ruler of this sort was sure to be guided by favourites, and, from what we read in the last lesson, we cannot wonder to hear that these

favourites were men from the Norman land. Indeed, Edward's court was filled with Normans. One of these was a priest, who became Bishop of London, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. "So high," says an old writer, "did he stand in the King's favour, that if he had said that a black crow was a white one the King would have sooner believed the Bishop's word than his own eyes."

Edward's weakness for these strangers was not pleasing to the English. Their murmurs of complaint found a spokesman in Earl Godwin, about whom we read in Lesson XXI. He had given his daughter Edith in marriage to the King. As Edward's father-in-law, and also as the greatest of Englishmen, he strove hard to check the growing power of the Normans in England. He and his house were therefore hated by them, and they were ever on the watch to make strife between him and the King. The visit of a great Norman chief, or baron, as we shall call him, gave them the chance of doing this.

Baron Eustace, for such was his name, returning from the English court to his own home over the sea, came to Dover, a town which we shall find on the sea-coast of Kent. He and

his men thought they could do as they pleased ; so they ordered the townsmen to give them the best lodgings and food in the place. But when one of the strangers, with his long jingling sword, was about to enter a house, the owner stood in the doorway and stopped him from going in. Angry words then arose, which were soon followed by blows, and the stranger fell dead before the door. A fierce battle at once began between the Baron's men and the people of Dover, in which about twenty on either side were slain. The Norman rode back to the King and told his own tale about the matter. The King, without hearing the other side of the story, ordered Earl Godwin to punish the men of Dover. But the Earl said he would not do so, because it was not right to punish any man without giving him a fair trial in a court of justice, and hearing what he had to say. This brave answer of the Earl gave the Norman favourites a chance of bringing about his ruin. Edward was made jealous and angry ; and in the end Godwin and his sons were obliged to leave the country.

SUMMARY.

King Edward's court soon became filled with Normans. These favourites of the King hated Earl God-

win and the English. Once the men of Dorset quarrelled with the followers of the Norman baron, Eustace. Godwin bravely stood up for the townsmen. This offended the King. So Godwin and his sons had to leave the country.

Bar'-on, in old times a great
landowner, who had de-

pendants to fight for
him.

gent'-le
fav'-our-ites

mur'-murs
com-plaint'

spokes'-man
jing-ling



LESSON XXIV.

LAST YEARS OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

WHILE Earl Godwin was away, the English court was visited by the head of the Norman people—William, Duke of Normandy. He was a very able ruler, and one of the bravest and most skilful soldiers of the time. He was well pleased with his visit, for he saw on all sides his own countrymen high in favour, and holding the highest places. He noted also that Edward had no child. So he returned to Normandy with the hope that the fair land of England would one day be his.

The victory of the Norman favourites over Godwin and his family did not last very long. The Earl and his sons came back from over the sea, and were joyously welcomed by the men of London and the south. Most of the Normans were then driven out of the country, and

the King and the Earl became once more friends.

After Godwin's death his son Harold took his place, and soon won for himself the fame of being the greatest of living Englishmen. It was about this time that Harold, during a cruise in the English Channel, was driven by a storm on to the coasts of Normandy, and thus fell into the hands of Duke William. The Duke would not allow the English Earl to return home until he had made him swear to help him to become King of England after the death of the Confessor. Harold took the oath offered by William, because he could not get his freedom without doing so. But an oath was a most solemn matter, and most men in those days would never think of breaking it. So in after years, when Harold refused to keep the oath that had been forced upon him, he was called a very bad man by the Normans, and was bitterly hated by them. When Edward lay on his death-bed, he singled out Harold as the best and ablest man to take charge of the country. The old King stretched forth his hands towards him and spoke the words, "To thee, Harold, my brother, I commit my kingdom."

Edward the Confessor died early in the year 1066 A.D. His body was buried in the church called the West Minster, which he had caused to be built near his own palace by the river Thames, near the City of London.

DATE.

Edward the Confessor reigned from 1042 A.D. to 1066 A.D.

SUMMARY.

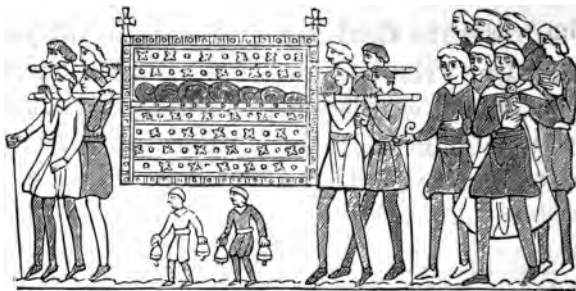
The English people loved Godwin. So the Earl and his family soon came back to England. After Godwin's death his son Harold took his place, and King Edward desired that Harold should be king after him. William, Duke of Normandy, wished to prevent this, and once, when Harold was his prisoner, William made Harold take a solemn oath to help him to become King of England. Edward built Westminster Abbey and was buried there.

vis'-it-ed
cruise
chan'-nel

oath
sol'-emn
sing'-led

com-mit
min'-ster
bur'-i-ed





FUNERAL OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR (FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY).

LESSON XXV.

KING HAROLD, THE SON OF GODWIN.

As soon as Edward the Confessor's body was buried in the West Minster, the wise men of England came together, and chose for their king the wisest and bravest of all their nobles, Harold, son of Godwin. There were two other men, who, thinking they had a better right to the throne, were very angry at the nation's choice, and made up their minds to wage war against the new king. These were Tostig, one of Harold's brothers, and William, Duke of Normandy, of whom we read in the last lesson.

Tostig asked the King of Norway to help

him with men and ships. This King of Norway was a very tall man, who had won a great name as a brave soldier in many wars. Joining Tostig, the forces of both leaders sailed up the rivers Humber and Ouse, and made themselves masters of the country about York. Harold hastened from the south with all his men, and found the army of his brother and the King of Norway at Stamford Bridge. He rode before their line of battle, and saw behind their shining spears a tall figure on horseback, in a blue mantle and bright helmet. "Who is that horseman?" asked Harold of one of his captains.

"The King of Norway," he replied.

"He is a tall and stately king," said Harold; "but he has not long to live. Go to my brother and tell him that, if he will cease from this war, I will give him one of my great earldoms, and he shall be rich and powerful in England."

"And what will he give to my friend, the King of Norway?" asked Tostig of the messenger.

"Seven feet of earth for a grave," was the answer.

"No more?" said Tostig with a smile.

"Well, perhaps a little more, as the King of Norway is a very tall man."

"Ride back," shouted Tostig, "and tell King Harold to make ready for the fight."

Soon afterwards the armies dashed against each other, and fought fiercely; but Harold's skill won the day. Tostig and the King of Norway, with the bravest of their men, were left dead on the field of battle, while the victor withdrew to York to rejoice over his success.

DATES.

Harold, son of Godwin, chosen King . . .	1066 A.D.
Battle of Stamford Bridge	" "

SUMMARY.

On Edward's death Harold was chosen King. His brother Tostig, with the King of Norway and a large army, landed in Yorkshire to oppose him. Harold defeated them at Stamford Bridge. Tostig and the King of Norway with their bravest warriors were killed.

no'-bles
hel'-met

state'-ly
earl-dom

hast'-en-ed
man'-tle



LESSON XXVI.

INVASION OF THE NORMANS.

HAROLD was holding a great feast in the city of York when a horseman, covered with mud from long riding, arrived with the news that Duke William of Normandy had landed in the south of England. The feast was at once broken up, and in a week Harold was in London, ready to meet this other foe.

Duke William wished people to believe that the crown of England really belonged to him. He said that Edward the Confessor gave it to him at the time of his visit to England, which we read of in the Twenty-fourth Lesson, and that Harold had sworn a solemn oath to aid him to become king. But if this were true, neither Edward nor Harold had any right to do such a thing, because the power of choosing a king rested with the wise men of England. They did not choose either Duke William or Tostig, but *Harold*, who was therefore the true English

king. But the Norman duke set it abroad that he was cheated out of his rights, and his own people and all France believed his story, and hated Harold for breaking his oath. He said that he would give the fair lands of England to those who would help him to fight against Harold, and in this way he got together a great army of horsemen and foot-soldiers. With these men William crossed the English Channel and landed on the coast of Sussex, without hindrance of any kind, because Harold was away in the north warring with Tostig and the giant King of Norway.

Thus the Normans had many days' time to rest and prepare for the great struggle with the English.

Harold was advised by one of his brothers to stay in London until all the fighting men should come together ; but the King was so eager to meet the Norman duke, that he hurried southwards to the Sussex coast, without waiting for the men of the north to join him. In making such haste Harold acted unwisely. How he fought the Normans must be told in the next lesson.

DATE.

Invasion of the Normans . . . September, 1066 A.D.

SUMMARY.

The power to choose a king rested with the wise men of England, and they had chosen Harold. But the Duke of Normandy claimed the crown. While Harold was rejoicing at York over his victory at Stamford Bridge he heard that William had landed in Sussex, and at once hurried to meet him.

a-broad'
cheat'-ed

hin'-drance
gi'-ant

war'-ring
pre-pare'





LESSON XXVII.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

THE forces of Harold and William of Normandy sighted each other a few miles from Hastings, on the Sussex coast. The English stood on the brow of a hill having a gentle

slope looking towards the south. In their midst floated the royal standard, upon which was woven in gold the image of a fighting man. Under this flag Harold took his place on foot, and there also stood the warriors who had fought so well against Tostig. These men wore coats upon which were sewn rings of iron, and their heads were covered with helmets shaped like a cone, having a piece in front to protect the nose. They were armed with heavy battle-axes, swords, and darts, and carried on their left arms shields in the form of a kite. The rest of the English were armed with whatever weapons they could find. Some had nothing better than clubs, iron-pointed stakes, stone hammers, pitchforks, and such rustic things; but one and all had stout hearts. Harold, knowing that the Normans were good horsemen, and usually fought on horseback, raised a row of strong palings in front of his men. He also told his men to keep behind this wooden fence, and on no account to leave it.

The Normans drew nigh to the English host in three divisions. In front marched the archers, armed with bows and arrows. Next came heavy-armed footmen carrying long straight swords and pear-shaped shields. Last

of all rode the horsemen in coats of mail, armed with lances, swords, and shields.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when the Norman bowmen began the battle with a flight of arrows. Then the heavy-armed troops rushed towards the wooden palisading shouting in their tongue the war-cry, "God help us!" In vain they tried to force their way through. They were received with the English cries, "God Almighty," and "Holy Rood," and few who came within reach of the dreaded English battle-axe returned alive. Now the horsemen dash up the hill in the hope of breaking the English line of defence. Their lances snap and shiver against that wall of shields, and man and horse go down with one sweep of the death-giving axe. Thus throughout the day the battle went against the Normans.

Duke William fought in the thick of the fight as brave as a lion. Two horses were killed under him. He felt that, unless he could draw the English away from their place on the hill, the battle was lost. So he ordered his horsemen to feign retreat. When the English saw this, they rushed down the slope in pursuit, forgetting Harold's command to

keep behind their defences. Then the Norman horse turned suddenly round and fell upon them with great slaughter. Up the hill and through the fence they rode, and dashed amongst the English host. Harold and a chosen band fought fiercely around the standard. Twilight was fast drawing nigh, when an arrow struck the English king in the eye, and brought him to the ground wounded unto death. Then the English fled, and left the Normans masters of the field of battle. Duke William pitched his tent that night on the spot where Harold's banner had stood.

The Battle of Hastings was one of the most famous fights in our history, for it placed England in the hands of a stranger king, under whom many and great changes were made.

DATE.

Battle of Hastings 1066 A.D.

SUMMARY.

In the Battle of Hastings the English fought on the side of a hill behind a wooden fence, through which the Norman horsemen tried in vain to break. At last the Normans, by pretending to retreat, drew the English from their place of safety, and by this trick won the

day. Harold was killed, and so William, Duke of the Normans, became master of England.

Rus'-tic, belonging to farm life.

float-ed
weap'-ons
pal'-ings

di-vis'-i-on
mail
lanc'-es

feign
pur-suit'
stand'-ard





THE TOWER OF LONDON AS IT APPEARED IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

LESSON XXVIII.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

THE Battle of Hastings made the Normans masters of the South of England only. But the English were without a leader, for Harold and most of his bravest nobles were slain in that fight. Then the nobles who remained met in London, and there it was agreed to offer the kingdom to

the Norman duke, who, they hoped, might govern the country as well as Canute the Dane had done, about whom we read in the Nineteenth Lesson. So on Christmas Day, in the same year that Edward the Confessor died, William was crowned King of all England in the West Minster, where brave Harold had been crowned a few months before.

The new King is usually called William the Conqueror, because England came into his hands by conquest, though that is not the **only** reason for the name. He had much trouble in making himself master of the middle and northern parts of the island. The people in those districts fought stubbornly against him, and many years passed away before they were forced to accept him as their king. In another lesson we shall read how some brave Englishmen chose rather to die sword in hand than yield to the Norman rule.

The Conqueror gave the lands of those English slain at Hastings to his own friends, and in this way and by other grants the soil of England passed into the hands of Normans. These new landlords built great stone castles on their estates, after the fashion in their native country, in order to make sure their own

safety in case the English people should rise



against them. We can see in some parts of our country the ruins of many of these buildings.

The Normans could not speak a word of

English. Their own speech was French. Thus there were two tongues in use in our island for many years. The great men and their friends spoke French, while the townsmen, farmers, and labourers used their native English. It was a long time before the Norman lords learnt to use the English speech, and forget that they were once strangers in the land. This they did at last, and then they were proud to call themselves Englishmen.

SUMMARY.

On the Christmas Day following the Battle of Hastings William was crowned King. He gave much land in England to his own Norman friends, who built great stone castles on their estates. The Normans could only speak French. So, for many years, two languages were in use in our country.

gov'-ern-ed
stub'-born-ly

e-states'
fash'-i-on

ru'-ins
land'-lords



LESSON XXIX.

HEREWARD THE WAKE, AND THE CAMP OF REFUGE.

IN our last lesson we read that the Normans had to fight hard to become masters of the middle and north of England. Many Englishmen, though beaten, would not agree to live under the Norman rule. Some betook themselves to the woods, which then covered much of the land, and thence made sudden attacks upon the Normans who came in their way. Others left the country to find homes elsewhere.

Of the many stout-hearted men who would not yield, the bravest was Hereward the Wake—that is, the Watchful. Under his leadership a great number of Englishmen banded together in the marshy land of the Isle of Ely, and there made war against the new King and his friends.

This Isle of Ely was the place where Canute often went, as we read in an earlier lesson. It was just the spot upon which to form

a Camp of Refuge. It was cut in all ways by rivers, streams, and broad lakes, and so swampy that horsemen could scarcely find a footing. The few roads which led through the district were little known to strangers. Here, too, were reeds and bulrushes, where Hereward's men could hide, and then sally forth upon the passing enemy. The Normans tried year after year to force their way into this Camp of Refuge, but Hereward always beat them back with such ease and loss that they said he was a wizard.

King William at length came himself to order the plan of attack. He began to build a wooden causeway two miles long, to reach the heart of the hostile camp, but the workmen were so often killed by the sudden onsets of the English, that the work went on but slowly. At last he sent for a Norman old woman, who was thought to be a witch, to aid him. In those days the belief in witchcraft was common, so we must not blame William for doing such a foolish thing. He placed the old woman on the top of a tower at the end of the works to bewitch his troublesome foes. But Hereward, as cunning as he was brave, waited for the wind to blow towards the causeway. Then he

set fire to the dry reeds and rushes, which grew in plenty on all sides. The flames, fanned by the breeze, spread quickly, and very soon tower and witch, workmen and soldiers, were burnt to death.

The King then formed the plan of starving out the camp by a blockade. His ships watched the eastern coast all about the Wash, while his soldiers guarded the roads on land. Now there was in the Isle of Ely a religious house, or abbey. It was the same place where Canute stopped to hear the singing of the monks. The monks of this house could not bear to have their supply of meat and drink cut off, so they showed the Normans a secret way of reaching the English stronghold. By a sudden attack the Camp of Refuge was broken up, and hundreds of Englishmen slain. Hereward escaped by throwing himself into the marshes, where the Normans could not follow him. What became of the hero at last we cannot tell. Some say he was murdered; others say he listened to the offers of the King, and became his man. "Had there been three such in England," wrote a Norman poet, "William would never have come there; and had Hereward lived, he would have driven out the invaders."

SUMMARY.

After the Battle of Hastings Hereward the Wake formed a Camp of Refuge for the English fugitives among the marshes of the Isle of Ely. Here he long defied the Norman arms. People then believed in witchcraft, and said that Hereward was a wizard. But at length King William broke up this last English stronghold.

Wiz'-ard, a man supposed to work wonders by help of spirits or demons.

Witch, the feminine of Wizard.

be-took'
lead'-er-ship

foot'-ing

witch'-craft
block-ade'



LESSON XXX.

LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR.

WILLIAM did not give up Normandy when he became King of England. The two countries remained under the same ruler for many years, and on this account Englishmen often took part in the wars between Normandy and other parts of France. When William's eldest son, Robert, grew to be a man, he wanted his father to make him Duke of Normandy, and thus separate that country from England. The King of France also wished for such a division, because he was afraid of the power of Normandy, so long as it was joined to England. But William refused to give up Normandy. Then Robert became very angry, and foolishly tried to take the country by force. In this attempt he was aided by the French king, who hoped to make himself master of Normandy at some time or other.

In the war that followed, father and son met each other in battle, and fought fiercely. They did not know one another, because the lower part of each one's face was covered with armour. In the struggle William was knocked off his horse and wounded by his son. Robert then heard his father's voice, and knew him. He was so full of shame for what he had done, that he at once jumped off his horse, flung himself on his knees, and begged his father's forgiveness. The war was brought to an end, and for a time father and son were once more friends.

Between William and the King of France, however, there could not be much friendship. They often quarrelled and made war against each other. It was in one of these wars that King William met with his death. As he was riding round a French town, which he had given up to the flames, his horse trod upon some burning ashes and threw him with much force against the pommel of his saddle. This hurt brought on a fever, of which he died, and his body was buried in his native country. He left behind him three sons, named Robert, William, and Henry. The last two became in turn Kings of England. Robert

held Normandy for a short time, but being too idle to rule, the dukedom was taken from him by his more able brothers.

DATE.

William the Conqueror's reign . 1066 A.D. to 1087 A.D.

SUMMARY.

Robert, the eldest son of William I., wanted his father to make him Duke of Normandy, and fought against him because he would not. The King of France helped Robert, because that king wished to become master of Normandy. In one of the wars caused by these quarrels William received an injury from which he died.

Pom'-mel, the raised front part of a saddle.

ac-count'
sep'-ar-ate

for-give'-ness
at-tempt'

duke'-dom
nat'-ive



LESSON XXXI.

DOMESDAY BOOK AND THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

WE have seen in the last two lessons that, if William the Norman had not been a very able soldier, he would never have won England. He was, however, as wise a ruler as he was a soldier. Nothing shows this better than the famous book which he ordered to be drawn up, and which goes by the name of the Domesday Book. Wishing, like a wise king, to know as much as he could of the state of the country over which he ruled, he sent learned men throughout the kingdom to make inquiries about the amount of land in each district. They were to ask all sorts of questions in order that he might have a full and true account of the affairs of the people.

These men went about their work in this way. When they came to the chief town in any part, they sent a summons to all the parish priests and the head men to appear before them.

They then made them take an oath to answer truly all questions, just as witnesses now have to do in our courts of law. "What was the name of your township?" they asked. "Who was the lord, the bishop, or abbot thereof in the days of the good King Edward?"

William's men, we should notice, made no mention of Harold, because they were told not to count him as a right king at all, so they always went back in their questions to the times of Edward the Confessor.

Having learnt the name of the township and the past and present owners, they went on to ask, "How many thanes or gentry; how many freemen; how many men not free, or villeins, are there?"

"How many acres of wood, meadow, pasture, or plough land are there?"

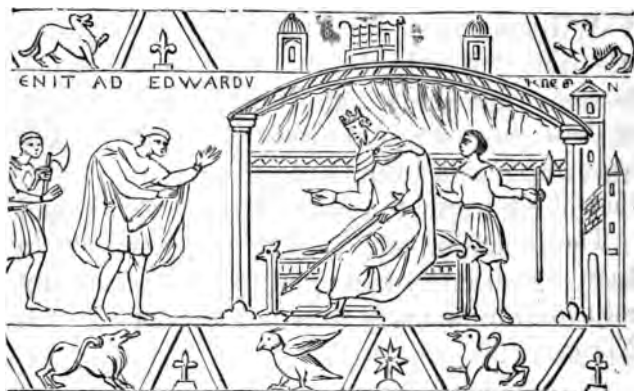
"What was their value in King Edward's time, and what are they worth now?"

"How many oxen, cows, sheep, horses, swine are there?"

All the answers to these questions were carefully noted down in the Latin tongue, because all learned men in those days wrote their books in Latin.

The book thus put together may now be

seen in the British Museum in London. If it had not been written we should never have known so much of the state of our country under Edward the Confessor, Harold, and William the Conqueror as we do now. No



HAROLD RETURNING FROM NORMANDY TO EDWARD.
(Specimen of the Bayeux Tapestry.)

other country in our part of the world has such a book of history.

There is another source from which we learn much of the story of William's conquest of England. Some of the Norman ladies wrought with the needle pictures of all the chief events that had to do with the Battle of Hastings. It is said that William's wife, Queen Matilda,

did the greater part of this stitch-work, but we cannot vouch for the truth of that. This piece of needlework, or tapestry, may now be seen in the library of a town named Bayeux, in the North of France, in the heart of what was once the dukedom of Normandy. This is the reason why the work is known as the Bayeux Tapestry. We may see in its needle-wrought pictures the sort of clothes, armour, and weapons of both English and Norman soldiers, and learn many other things about the times better than if we read an account of them in books.

The drawing on the other page is taken from the Bayeux tapestry. It shows Harold returning to King Edward after his stay in Normandy.

SUMMARY.

Domesday Book, now in the British Museum, tells us much about the landowners and state of England in the time of William I. We also learn much from the pictures of the Bayeux tapestry.

Vil'-leins, peasants bound to an estate.

in-quir'-ies
af'-fairs
sum'-mons

wit'-ness-es
town'-ship
ab'-bot

vouch
tap'-es-try
weap'-ons

LESSON XXXII.

THE NEW FOREST AND THE RED KING.

THE Normans were very fond of hunting. The Conqueror himself loved to chase the stag or wild boar, and he strictly forbade any one to hunt in the royal forests without his leave. He caused a very large hunting-ground to be made a few miles distant from the old city of Winchester. It was called the New Forest, and is known by that name even to this day. In order to make this spot fitted for his favourite sport, a great many villages, hamlets, and churches were pulled down, and the people were driven out to find homes in other places. The poor natives thought this act was very cruel, and believed that no good would come of it.

When the Conqueror died, the throne was given to his second son, William, who was usually called Rufus, or the Red, because of the colour of his face and hair. He was, like

his father, a good soldier ; but he was a wicked man and a bad king. He cared more for pleasure than ruling justly. As long as he could get enough money for his vicious wants he did not mind what befell his kingdom. He was hateful to rich and poor, because of the unjust ways he used to fill his purse. Men said that a life like his would surely end badly.

The Red King was fond of hunting in the New Forest. Whenever he set out to enjoy a day's sport, a merry band of nobles always joined him. Feasting, and drinking, and merry-making marked the days when the horns of the Red King and his friends sounded in the forest glades.

Upon a day in the month of August, in the year 1100 A.D., the King and a few friends met in the New Forest for a day's hunting. Among the royal party was the King's youngest brother, Henry, who was called "the Fine Scholar," because he could read and write. A merry breakfast they had that morning in the hunting-lodge, and feasted longer than usual, drinking more wine than was good for them. At length the party broke up, and set out in different ways to hunt in the great wood. The King took with him a keen sportsman, named Sir

Walter Tyrrell, to whom he had given that morning two well-made arrows.

Late in the evening a charcoal-burner, passing through the forest with his cart, came across the dead body of a hunter with an arrow through his heart. It was the corpse of the Red King. Not one of the party who had feasted together in the morning was to be found. Early next day the poor woodman's cart bore into the city of Winchester the King's dead body all stained with blood. No one could tell by whose hands the fatal arrow was sent, or whether the deed was done by chance or on purpose. The King was last seen alive in company with Tyrrell, and some said that Tyrrell shot him by accident. But that knight said the arrow was sent by some unseen hand. The truth was never found out.

William Rufus was the third member of the Conqueror's house who was killed in the New Forest. No wonder, then, that the men of those days thought the great hunting-ground a doomed spot for the royal family.

DATE.

William the Red's reign . . . 1087 to 1100 A.D.

SUMMARY.

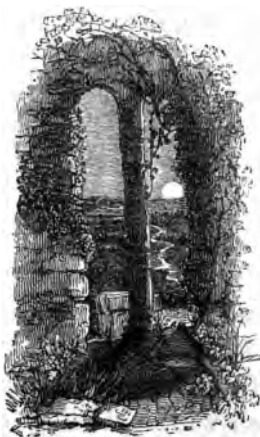
The New Forest is a large district near Winchester, laid waste by the Conqueror for the purpose of sport. William II., the second son of the Conqueror, was called Rufus, or the Red King, because of his red hair. He cared more for pleasure than for ruling justly. He was shot with an arrow while hunting in the New Forest with his brother Henry and Sir Walter Tyrrell, but by whose hand no one knew.

Doom-ed, certain to come to evil.

for'-est
vic'-i-ous

schol'-ar
dif'-fer-ent

ar'-rows
char'-coal



LESSON XXXIII.

HENRY, "THE FINE SCHOLAR."

HENRY, "the Fine Scholar," was chosen king by some of the nobles directly after the death of his brother Rufus. Some wanted to give the crown to the eldest brother Robert, but he was obliged to content himself with the dukedom of Normandy.

Henry was a cunning prince. To please the English he took to wife the good Princess Maud, who was the daughter of the King of Scotland, and could trace her descent from the old English kings. So for the first time since the Norman Conquest an English Queen sat on the throne of England. He wanted the help of the English to make himself as strong as his father, William the Conqueror, and he longed to be Duke of Normandy as well as King of England. He therefore did many things to win their good-will. He kept down the great barons, who often treated the common people

with much harshness. He also gave to the men of London, and to the people of other towns, more liberty of trade and the right to manage their own town affairs. Thus the English were won over to his side.

In awhile Henry found it easy to pick a quarrel with his brother Robert. He sailed over to Normandy with a strong English army, took Robert a prisoner, and made himself master of the country. Thus Normandy and England were joined together once more.

Henry sent his brother to Cardiff Castle, which was then a very distant and lonely place in Wales, but is now a most thriving seaport. There Robert was kept until the day of his death. A story was long believed that his eyes were blinded by the order of his brother Henry, who was afraid that he might escape and give him trouble. Perhaps this may not be true, for in those days many things were written as facts, which were only the idle tales of gossips.

SUMMARY.

After William the Red, his younger brother, Henry, was chosen king. Henry married Maud, daughter of the Scottish king. She was descended from English kings. Henry wanted to be Duke of Normandy as well

as King of England, and therefore he tried to please the English, that they might help him. He kept his elder brother, Robert, a captive in Cardiff.

di-rect'-ly
cun'-ning
con-tent'

prin'-cess
de-scent'
writ'-ten

harsh'-ness
thriv'-ing
gos'-sips



CARDIFF CASTLE.

LESSON XXXIV.

THE WHITE SHIP.

HENRY's success in the Norman land was followed by an event which almost broke his heart. His only son William was fast growing into manhood, and he wished to present him to the Norman lords as their future Duke. So father and son crossed over to Normandy, and were well received on all sides. Having settled all his plans, Henry, very pleased with his good fortune, set out on his return to England, leaving his son to follow in another vessel, called the "White Ship," in which were fifty rowers.

Prince William had with him a great number of young nobles. Instead of hurrying on board before the sun went down, they held a parting feast, and sent casks of wine to make the sailors merry. Twilight fell before the Prince and his friends left the shore, and then the "White Ship," with its freight of three hundred souls,

started for the English coast. The rowers, flushed with wine, pulled hard and cheerily; for vessels then were moved by oars, when there was no wind to fill the sails. The man at the helm had taken too much wine, and, missing his course in the darkness, steered the craft on a sunken rock. A fearful crash, and then shrieks and cries broke the stillness of the night, as the waters rushed into the sinking ship. A boat was at once lowered into the sea, and the Prince with a few friends put off, but hearing the screams of his half-sister, who was on board, he returned to save her. As soon as the boat touched the vessel's side, a crowd jumped in and swamped it. Only two of the three hundred escaped going down with the unlucky ship by clinging to the mast, and only one of these had strength to hold out through the night. In the early morning of the next day some fishermen saw the lonely figure of a man above the waters. They took him into their boat, and then learned from his lips the story of the wreck, and the loss of nearly three hundred lives.

Many days passed away before any one would venture to tell King Henry that the "White Ship" had gone down with his only son.

When he heard the fearful story he fainted. He long mourned the loss of the young Prince, and was never known to smile again.

The only child left to Henry was a daughter, named Matilda. Before his death, he did his utmost to get the nobles to support her claim to the throne, though a woman had never yet reigned alone in England. What befell her must be left for another lesson.

DATES.

Henry I.'s reign	.	.	.	1100 to 1135 A.D.
Wreck of the "White Ship"	.	.	.	1120 A.D.

SUMMARY.

King Henry took his son William into Normandy to present him to the Normans as their future Duke. The Prince came back in the "White Ship," which was wrecked. He was drowned in trying to save his sister. There was now only one child, a daughter, left to the King.

Freight, the load or burden of a ship.

suc-cess'
e-vent'
ves'-sel

row'-ers
mer'-ry
swamp-ed

wreck
mourn'-ed
reign'-ed,



LESSON XXXV.

HOW MATILDA WAS SET ASIDE BY STEPHEN.

As soon as Henry was dead, all the plans and schemes he had cunningly made came to nothing. His daughter Matilda was not made queen, because several of the great nobles did not care to have a woman to reign over them in days when there were so many wars. So they chose Henry's nephew, Stephen, whose mother was the daughter of William the Conqueror. This took place in the year 1135 A.D.

Matilda's husband at this time was a French earl, and by his help and that of other Frenchmen she was able to seize and hold Normandy. Thus the Norman dukedom was taken again from the English crown.

But Matilda had many friends also in England. They took up her cause, and for many years waged war against the party of Stephen. A war between the people of the same country is called a *civil* war. It is the worst of all wars,

because friends and relatives may sometimes take opposite sides, and shed each other's blood. Such was the struggle between Matilda and Stephen, and it made England very unhappy.

The King of Scotland, who was Matilda's uncle, took up arms in her cause, and invaded the north of England with a great number of men. These invaders behaved like savages. They robbed churches, killed men and children, and drove the women before them in crowds, like so many cattle, and treated them with great cruelty. When they reached a small town in Yorkshire, called Northallerton, they found an army of Englishmen ready to give battle. In the midst of the English stood a mast, to which were fixed the banners of three English saints. Above the flags was a crucifix—that is to say, an image of Jesus Christ on a cross. The English believed that these banners would in some way help them to beat the enemy, and this was the reason why they were brought into the field. At any rate, they fought very bravely around this standard, slew thousands of the Scots, and won the fight. The battle is always called in our history the “Battle of the Standard.”

Matilda was once shut up in the city of Oxford. It was winter, and the snow lay thick on the ground. Stephen's men were watching the ways outside the walls, and the capture of Oxford Castle seemed certain. Matilda was told by her friends that her only chance of escape was to dress herself in white and cross the snow in the dead of night. This she did in company with three faithful followers, and thus passed unseen by the guards of Stephen's army.

SUMMARY.

The barons would not have a woman over them, so they chose Stephen, a nephew of Henry I., and grandson of William the Conqueror. But Matilda seized Normandy, and her uncle, the Scottish king, helped her against Stephen.

In-vad-ers, strangers who come into a country to rob or conquer.

schemes
queen

hus'-band
strug'-gle

be-ha'-ved
ban'-ners



LESSON XXXVI.

MISERY OF ENGLAND UNDER STEPHEN.

DURING this dreadful civil war, fighting-men were brought over from France to take whichever side paid them best. The old writers of the time tell us how wretched our country was then, and we cannot do better than read what they wrote. "The foreigners filled the land full of castles. They pressed hard upon the people by making them work at these castles; and when they were finished they filled them with devils and evil men. They took those whom they thought had goods, both men and women, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, and put them to cruel torture. They hung some by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by the thumbs, or by the head, and put burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string round their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them in dungeons wherein were adders,

and snakes, and toads, and thus wore them out.



MILITARY COSTUMES.

Some they put into a chest that was short and narrow, and they put sharp stones therein, and

crushed the man so that they broke all his bones. They were always levying taxes upon the towns, and when the wretched townsfolk had no more to give, then burnt they all the towns, so well mightest thou walk a whole day's journey, or even thou shouldst see a man settled in a town, or its lands tilled. Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land. Wretched men starved with hunger. Some lived on alms who had once been rich. Some fled the country. Never was there more misery, and never heathens acted worse than these."

At last both sides grew tired of this horrid war with all its cruelty. It was settled that Matilda's son Henry should be king after Stephen, and the civil strife was thus brought to an end. In the next year Stephen died, and young Henry II. mounted the throne.

DATE.

Stephen's reign . . . 1135 to 1154 A.D.

SUMMARY.

In the war between Stephen and Matilda the English people were robbed and injured by both sides. At last it was agreed that Matilda's son should be king after Stephen.

Tax-es, payments to the Government.

wretch'-ed
tor'-ture
knot'-ted

twist'-ed
dun-geons
towns'-folk

alms
mis-er-y
heath-ens



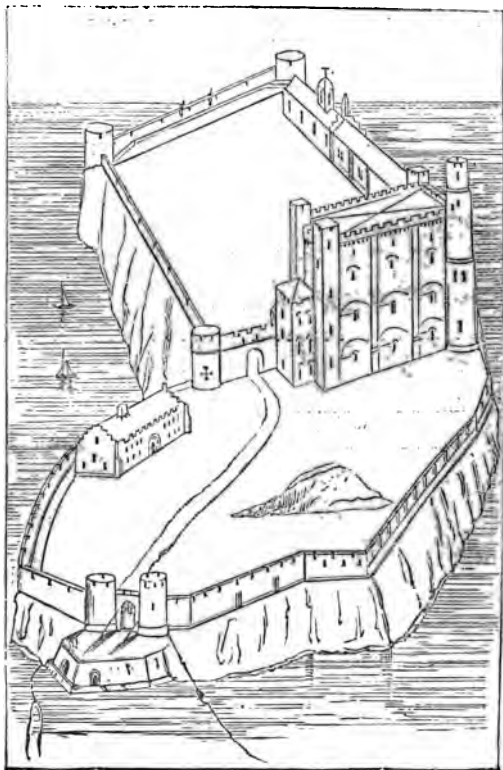
NORMAN KEEP, PEVENSEY.

LESSON XXXVII.

THE HOMES OF ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMAN KINGS.

WE have seen that after the Battle of Hastings four foreign kings reigned in England one after the other ; that is to say, William the Conqueror, William II., Henry I., and Stephen. These four are often called the Norman Kings of England, and their rule covers the period of *time from 1066 A.D. to 1154 A.D.*; that is,

Eighty-eight years. The Homes of England were then very unlike those we see in our day,



NORMAN CASTLE.

And in this lesson we shall learn something about them.

Under these Norman kings many castles were built for the dwellings of the nobles and other great men, who were strangers in the land and wanted such places for safety. A hill, or rock, or some high ground near a river,



A ROOM IN A CASTLE.

was usually chosen as a site upon which to raise a baron's stronghold, and this was further strengthened by a deep ditch, or moat, as it was called, dug all round the walls. The chief building, where the baron and his family

lived, was called the Keep. Between this and the massive outer walls was an open space of ground, or court, where stood the stables and out-houses for the servants and others. The entrance to the castle grounds was barred by a strong gateway, which, on account of the ditch, could only be reached from the outside by a drawbridge. The passage through the gateway could be closed by a spiked iron grating let down from above, and the archway was pierced with holes through which melted lead or boiling pitch could be poured upon an enemy trying to force an entrance.

The grey ruins of many of these buildings are to be seen in various parts of England, and they show how strong the baronial homes were in those days.

As the Norman lords spent much of their time in the open air, they had but scant furniture in their dwellings. The chief room was the large hall, where the family and servants took their meals together. A long rough table and some rude benches were all the articles it held. Carpets for the floor were then unknown; but straw in winter, and grass or rushes in summer, were strewn in plenty upon the ground. The lord's bedroom had a few stools

and a crib with a straw bed. The ladies of the family had nothing better. The servants had to put up with a bench, or a mat spread upon the floor, or a heap of straw or rushes.

If the homes of the rich were so bare of furniture, poor indeed must have been the dwellings of the farmer and labourer. Their houses were small, rude cabins, built of wood, thatched with straw, and plastered with mud. They had only one or two rooms, in which might be found only an iron pot for cooking food, a pitcher, and a log or two, to serve as stools and table.

Chimneys were not in use either in the castle or lowly dwelling. A fire of wood, when needed, burnt on the hearth, and the smoke was left to find its way out through an opening in the roof.

Thus we see that there was little comfort to be found in the homes of either rich or poor in the times of the Norman Kings.

SUMMARY.

In the Norman times every baron lived in a strong castle, having a deep ditch, thick walls, and narrow windows. There was very little comfort inside. The poor lived in wooden cabins, with only an iron pot and a few logs for furniture. There were no chimneys, and the smoke went through a hole in the roof.

for'-eign
per'-i-od

ditch
moat

fur-ni-ture
chim'-neys

LESSON XXXVIII.

THE FOOD OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE NORMAN KINGS.

THE food of the common people under the Norman Kings was simpler and coarser than that of the upper classes. The bread of the working man was brown in colour, and made of rye, or oats, or barley ; but the rich man ate white bread made of the finest wheat flour. The brown bread, however, if less sweet than the other, was very good and wholesome. In our own time we do not find such food on the tables of common people, for they can now buy bread as white and fine as the richest man in the land. Indeed, they would not now eat the brown kind, and yet those who are better off in the world often like it better than white bread, because it is really richer in nourishment.

Cheese, butter, and bacon were the usual articles of diet in the homes of the common people. In the baron's castle there were many

dainty dishes of all kinds of meats. In the lord's kitchen the art of cooking was studied with much care. Fish of many sorts from the river, game from the fields and woods, and fowls that strutted in the farmyards were brought there in plenty. The peacock and the crane—birds which are now rare—were favourite dishes, and on great feast days the wild boar's head was thought a royal dainty. The boar's head was carried into the castle hall with much show and joy, and usually a song was sung as it was laid on the high table; but, if such music was wanting, a joyful shout took its place.

Besides the food named above the higher classes fed on the flesh of the ox, cow, calf, sheep, and pig. But when these meats were brought on the table they were called by Norman names. Thus the flesh of the ox and cow was named *beef*; the flesh of the calf was called *veal*; that of the sheep was termed *mutton*; and in the same way that of the pig was called *pork*. These are the names by which the flesh of these dead animals is now known, and we learn from this fact that they formed at first the dishes of the Norman gentry, and not the food of the poor.

There was not much garden produce in those days, and fruits were also few in kind. Apples and pears grew in the orchards, and gooseberries in the garden ; but oranges, which are now so common, were never seen in the land. Potatoes, cabbages, carrots, turnips, celery, lettuces, which are now grown in every cottager's plot of ground, were then unknown in England.

Drinks were also few in number. The rich had spiced wine, mead made from honey, and strong ale. The poor had cider, perry, and beer. Milk was a purer and better drink for both classes. But such things as tea, coffee, cocoa, were not known in our part of the world.

From this lesson, then, we learn that poor people in our day have, in some things, better supplies of food and drink than the rich had in the times of the Norman Kings.

SUMMARY.

In Norman times the poor could not get wheaten bread. The rich used to eat peacocks, cranes, and wild boars, besides common flesh-meat. Domestic animals kept their English names, but their flesh had Norman names given to it by the Norman masters. Oranges were unknown, and there were no potatoes, cabbages, carrots, or turnips.

Di-et, daily food.

coars'-er
nour-ish-ment

ba-con
pea-cock

po-ta-toes
let'-tuc-es

LESSON XXXIX.

SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS LESSONS.

IN the thirty-eight lessons that we have now read in this First Historical Reader, we have learned something of the early history of our country. The first people who lived in this island were the Ancient Britons, and then the country was known by the name of Britain, which still remains as one of its names. The Britons were almost savages. Soon after the birth of Jesus Christ, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, the Romans conquered Britain, and kept it under their power for about four hundred years. They taught the Britons how to build towns, make roads, and carry on trade. It was during this time that good men came to the island, and persuaded the people to become Christians.

The Romans at length withdrew to their own country, and left the Britons to take care *of themselves*. Then the Picts and Scots from

Scotland invaded Britain, and spread ruin wherever they came. As the Britons were not able to drive them back, they asked help of some Englishmen, who, under the leadership of two brothers named Hengist and Horsa, were then sailing about the coasts of Britain. These strangers having landed, and beaten the Picts and Scots, resolved to make the island their own home. So fresh bands of Englishmen came into the land, and conquered all except the western parts, where the Britons were forced to go. The English called the Britons Welsh, and their country Wales; and the Britons called the English Saxons. These names are now in use. After the English conquest the name of our island was changed to England.

The English were not Christians when they came here first. Some monks from the city of Rome, led by Augustine, converted the English to the Christian religion.

The English at first set up several kingdoms in their new home, and, of course, each kingdom had its own king. After many years had passed away, Egbert, the King of Wessex, made himself head over all the rest.

Just about that time the Danes began to

invade the land. They wanted to conquer England for themselves, but they were beaten by Alfred the Great, who, however, allowed them to settle in the midland and northern districts. In after years, when Ethelred the Unready was on the throne, fresh bands of Danes, under Sweyn and Canute, invaded the country, and drove Ethelred away. Canute then became King of England, and was followed in turn on the throne by two of his sons. Then the English sent to Normandy for Ethelred's son, Edward the Confessor, and placed him on the throne. This king favoured the Norman people, and brought many of them into this country. When he died, without leaving a son, the English nobles gave the crown to Harold, son of Earl Godwin. Then William, Duke of Normandy, made a claim to the English throne. Having gathered a great army, he crossed the English Channel, and landed on the coast of Sussex, while Harold was in Yorkshire fighting the King of Norway. The English and Normans soon met near the town of Hastings, where was fought a fierce battle, which ended in favour of William. Harold was killed, and then the Norman duke became King of England.

Many changes were made in England under the Norman Kings—William I., William II., Henry I., and Stephen. All the land passed into the hands of Norman barons, who built strong castles to keep the English people down. These new masters spoke French, and kept up their own customs. So there were two kinds of speech in use in England for many years. The great lords spoke French, and the common people English. After awhile the sons and grandsons of the Norman barons learned to speak English, and began to look upon England as their real home. Then they became more friendly with the English, and took pride in calling themselves Englishmen.

early
per-suad'-ed

re-solv'-ed
con'-quest

con-vert'-ed
north'-ern



LESSON XL.

CHIEF DATES.

Julius Cæsar first came to Britain	55 B.C.	
The Roman Conquest of Britain began	43 A.D.	
Caractacus taken prisoner	51	"
Boadicea died	61	"
The Romans leave Britain	410	"
The coming of Hengist and Horsa to Britain	449	"
The landing of Augustine in Kent	597	"
Death of the poet Cædmon	680	"
Death of the monk Bede	735	"
Wessex became head of the English kingdoms	827	"
Alfred began to reign	871	"
Defeat of the Danes by Alfred	878	"
Death of Alfred	901	"
Rollo the Dane founded Normandy	913	"
Ethelred the Unready became King	979	"
Murder of the Danes	1002	"
Flight of Ethelred to Normandy	1014	"
Canute the Dane's reign	1017	" to 1035
Edward the Confessor's reign	1042	" to 1066
Harold, son of Godwin, chosen King	1066	"
Battle of Stamford Bridge	1066	"
Battle of Hastings	1066	"
William the Conqueror's reign	1066	" to 1087
William the Red's reign	1087	" to 1100
Henry the First's reign	1100	" to 1135
Wreck of the "White Ship"	1120	"
Stephen's reign	1135	" to 1154



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